

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING AT ROYBAL MENTAL HEALTH

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



For the past five years, staff at Roybal Family Mental Health Center in East Los Angeles has made sure everyone has had something to celebrate during the holidays. Workers at Roybal sponsor “Basket and Blankets,” a food and necessary item giveaway for families most in need. Throughout the year, the clinic holds fundraisers to raise money to purchase necessities such as blankets, soap and bathroom tissue, as well as food, to make sure clients and their families have something to eat and have household essentials during the holidays.

This year, local businesses donated rugs and stuffed animals, and past and present program heads donated cash to assist in purchasing food and other necessities. Maria Arroyo, who heads the “Basket and Blanket” project, provided some figures. Her team collected: three 50-pound bags of rice, three 50-pound bags of beans, 80 cans of tomato sauce, cans of corn, 40 containers of oil, spaghetti sauce, instant mashed potatoes, chicken consume, cake mix, bathroom tissue, liquid hand and bar soap, dishwashing liquid, dish scrubbies, hand lotion, cleanser, napkins, toothpaste, 150 toothbrushes and more than 50 blankets. The items, along with forty chickens, were arranged into 45 baskets, were picked up at the clinic and/or delivered to families on December 20, 2012.

Ana Suarez, District Chief, SA 7, was on-hand to see the faces of the clients as they picked up the baskets. “Many of the staff here live in the community and want to support the clients, especially this time of year,” she said. “They want to make sure the families have something to celebrate.”



Additionally, Roybal's school-based program prepared stockings for all 58 students.

Everyone at Roybal played a role in supporting the "Baskets and Blankets" effort, but in particular, thanks go out to:

- Clerical team Miriam Cervantes, Martin Ponce, Angie Lopez, Martin Almanza, Soraya Ruelas;
- Patient Financial Workers Lourdes Marquez and Martha Perez;
- Case Managers Maria Gomez, Oscar Alvarez, Lucy Rivera-Vega, Ida Munoz and Neydi Abrams;
- Clinicians Cynthia Zamora, Veronica Hernandez, Wanta Yu, Janet Rico De Lucio, Meg McIlroy, Wendy Lopez, Margarita Muniz, Raul Garcia, Andrea Guido, Lorena Frcek;
- Supervisors Antonio Banuelos, Rocio Ortiz Gonzalez, Yolanda Hernandez-Lara and Mark Befort,
- Program Head Steve Hendrickson
- Special thanks to Maria Arroyo, the brains and heart of the operation.

